

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing syntactic foam including the steps of:

providing a predetermined ratio of constituent materials including a liquid phase binder and microspheres that are naturally buoyant in that binder;

blending the constituent materials into a mixture and placing the mixture into a mold mould;

allowing the microspheres to float to the top of the mixture;

draining excess liquid phase binder from the mold mould; and

allowing the remaining liquid phase binder to set or cure between the microspheres.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the microspheres are allowed to float to the top of the mixture until they become close packed.

3. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 2 or wherein the microspheres become close packed in a density approaching the natural microsphere bulk density.

4. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the step of allowing the microspheres to float to the top of the mixture until they become close packed is facilitated by selecting [[a]] the liquid phase binder composition that has to have sufficiently low viscous drag characteristics, and sufficiently long curing time, as to allow the microspheres to become close packed before the binder cures.

5. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein the liquid phase binder composition is selected by adding a predetermined amount of diluent.

6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the liquid phase binder includes an epoxy resin with hardener, and the diluent comprises acetone.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the excess liquid phase binder is drained from the bottom of the mold mould.

8. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the liquid phase binder is drained from the bottom of the mould mold until the close packed microspheres reach the bottom of the mold mould.

9. (Currently Amended) A syntactic foam article comprising close packed microspheres bound together by a cured composition, wherein the composition was, originally the liquid phase binder and wherein the foam was manufactured by a method according to claim 1.